

The National Tribune.

GEORGE E. LEMON & CO.,

Editors and Proprietors.

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GEORGE E. LEMON & CO.,

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We apologize to our readers for the delay of this month's TRIBUNE.

We have waited until the very close of the extra session in hopes that we might chronicle some action of one or both Houses on matters of importance to our patrons.

But the political excitement in the Senate and other causes have prevented any business matters from being pushed or acted upon in either body.

Hereafter THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE will be published regularly on the 15th of each month.

QUARTERLY PAYMENTS.

We offer the National Tribune at twenty-five cents per quarter, to all who choose to subscribe in that form, and to forward the cash for subscriptions. We do this to accommodate Pensioners and others—and to obtain as many names as we can at once, upon our subscription list—so as to mail at the reduced rates, which belong only to regular subscribers.

We have no fear that any one who subscribes for one quarter, will not find it essential to continue his subscription, for we mean to make this paper a necessity for the soldier, and the friend of the soldier.

GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC.

We do most earnestly ask the aid of all comrades of the G. A. R., in procuring subscribers for the National Tribune.

Our enterprise is for the benefit of the soldiers. We are established at the seat of Government, and can give the earliest and best information on subjects of special interest to them. We do not expect to make money out of the paper, but we want it to pay expenses. The terms are fixed at bottom prices—twenty-five cents per quarter—and every soldier ought to subscribe this petty sum. Our friends ought to understand that the difference in postage on a paper added to regular subscribers, and one that is sent occasionally, is very great, and that postage is one of our heaviest expenses.

Let every post take this into consideration,

and urge our subscription list among its member and their friends.

If any matters of general interest shall be transacted in any post or State, or National organization, which deserve general circulation, we shall be glad to receive them, and give them due notice. We will also publish notices of Military Re-unions, to be held at any point in the United States, and, generally, any matter which may be for the advantage of the Volunteers of the War.

"PENSION ALL OR PENSION NONE."

This is the cry now in the South. The Augusta (Georgia) Chronicle and Sentinel speaks the voice of the great mass of the South when it says: "We are tired of all buzzard and no turkey. There must in future be a fair distribution, or else the thing must stop altogether, and we will soon have, if we have it not now, the power to put on the brakes."

It has become fashionable among certain politicians in high places to diminish or wholly disregard the vast difference in law and in conscience between standing by the Union and standing in arms against it. Yet there was a wrong and a right side in that quarrel. There was patriotism to save and rebellion to destroy, and they were not equal in the sight of God or man. Treason remains a crime in the Constitution and the law. The levying of war against the United States was and is treason.

The motives that led masses of men into this great crime were various, and differed in degree, but the crime was the same.

Some may have believed, in all honesty, that it was their duty so to do, but the crime in the act done is still the same. Most of the great crimes of the world have been perpetrated under just such delusions. Men have burned others at the stake for the glory of God, but history calls them criminals. Men may honestly believe in Mormonism, but polygamy remains a crime. The Thugs of India consider murder as the highest style of sacrifice to their accursed deity, but British justice lawfully hangs them for the crime. The Communist believes that it is his mission to equalize property, and his duty to destroy wealth, but when he burns a house, we punish him for arson.

The Rebels of the South sought to overthrow the nation, they were conquered and forgiven, but they must bear their part as they have means and property in paying the salvage, and should be grateful that such grace is allowed them. They are not; they are restive; they threaten what they will do in the near future; they gather strength from the time-serving utterances of weak-kneed politicians, and do not know the solid convictions of the vast mass of men who compose the brain and hands of the country. As the hour approaches, which they believe will record the triumph of the South, by securing the legislative and executive branches of the Government, the mask occasionally drops, and they venture to state publicly what they have always said privately, as in this extract from the Mercury, of Meridian, Mississippi:

The Confederates could not and would not ask any beneficences from the Government which maimed and destroyed them, and devastated and laid waste their lands, and razed their homes, because, in daring to try the conclusions of war, they dared to abide its results. They have nothing to ask of the Government which despoiled them in flagrant war, except that it shall not unjustly despoil them of their substance in peace to bestow upon their soldiers of spoliation. In war, we resisted and resisted the spoliation by all means authorized by laws of war; in peace, as freemen, and the equals, and the peers of any and all of the men who opposed us in war, we owe it to ourselves, to our honor, and pride of citizenship, to oppose the spoliation by all lawful means that belong to us in a state of peace. If Mr. Merrimon had shaped his repealing bill to abolish all the sections of the law which pensions the soldiers who fought in the Federal army in the civil war, he would have done what pride demands of

a Southern Senator, and what a delicate sense of honor in a Northern Senator would approve.

And so we warn all soldiers of the old flag of the nation, that so soon as the South gains power, either the pensions of the men who upheld the national honor will cease, or they must share with those who fought to overthrow the vast fabric of the Union, and by their misapplied courage made the issue uncertain for years of struggle, privation, toil, and suffering.

Commissioner Bentley and his Proposed System of Pension District Boards.

Our present Commissioner of Pensions has earned the respect and esteem of all who have had dealings with the office by his careful attention to duty, and his general good administration of affairs.

It is therefore with no ill-feeling toward him that we are compelled to differ from the propositions he has submitted, and to criticize the system recommended by him in his Supplemental Report of October 31, 1876.

We quote the important parts of this report:

The most simple and efficient, and, at the same time, economical plan which I am able to suggest, is as follows: Divide the country into districts, of such size, considering both the territory and population, as that one surgeon, devoting his whole time to the duties, would generally be able to make all the medical examinations in any district which the pension laws might require. Appoint as many highly-qualified surgeons as there are districts, with a reasonable annual salary, all to be under the direction of the Commissioner of Pensions; one surgeon to be assigned to each district, subject to be ordered from place to place within the district, and to be changed about from one district to another, as the emergencies of the service might require. One competent clerk should be sent to each district, to act in conjunction with the surgeon, or separately, as his duties and the regulations of the Commissioner of Pensions should from time to time require. These two should constitute a commission on behalf of the Government to make the required medical examinations in any case, and to receive the parol testimony offered in its support; and, to that end, the claimant, with his principal witnesses, should appear before them, and submit themselves to cross-examination on behalf of the Government. If a material witness resides in another district, his testimony should be taken by the commission of that district, and forwarded to the commission having the case in hand. When the claimant has furnished all the proof he desires to furnish, and submitted to such examinations as are required, the whole case to be transmitted to the office for final settlement.

This commission may be generally charged with the special investigations in the district.

In case it should be found that work was accumulating in any district faster than the regular commission could dispose of it, a clerk could be detailed from the office for a limited period to aid in bringing it up.

This plan is simple, and its methods and detail equally simple and direct.

If the proposed plan shall be adopted, the whole force of pension examining surgeons may be dismissed. It will most completely provide for the necessary special investigations, for which considerable appropriations are annually made, and will cut off not less than 33½ per cent. of the force now employed in the office in Washington. The cost of the proposed change will not exceed the following figures, viz:

Sixty surgeons, at salary and expenses, say \$3,000 each.....	\$180,000
Sixty clerks, at salary and expenses, say, \$2,100 each.....	126,000
	306,000

Under the proposed plan the force employed in the office may be reduced at least 33½ per cent. of the whole, in addition to the whole special service force in the field:

Reduction in office.....	\$141,293 33
Salary of nineteen special agents.....	22,800 00
Appropriation for special service for 1876.....	40,000 00
One half of medical examinations for two years, one year including the biennial examinations, fiscal years 1875 and 1876.....	139,553 73
	\$343,647 06

It is seen that an actual saving of \$37,647.06 will be made by adopting the plan recommended, to say nothing of its almost incalculable advantages in the line of securing reliable medical examinations and other testimony in cases, and their consequent prompt and satisfactory determination.

Very respectfully, yours,

J. A. BENTLEY.

The Hon. SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

It will thus be seen that the proposition is to divide the entire territory of the United States into sixty districts, giving to each, one examining surgeon and one clerk, the clerical force, however, to be increased, if necessary.

The surgeon and clerk or clerks to constitute a board or commission on the part of the Government to make medical examinations and secure